



The Honorable Jim Himes

Connecticut's 4th District

The Benefits of Health Care Reform for Connecticut's 4th District

The long overdue passage of health care reform will put Americans back in control of their health insurance choices and ensure all citizens have access to high-quality, affordable health care. Data from the U.S. Census, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Department of Health and Human Services show that hundreds of thousands of families and individuals in Fairfield County will see improvements in their coverage or benefit from provisions in the legislation.

In Connecticut's 4th District, health care reform will:

- Improve coverage for **463,000** residents with health insurance.
- Give tax credits to **94,000** families and **19,700** small businesses to help them afford coverage.
- Improve Medicare for **99,000** beneficiaries, including closing the donut hole.
- Extend coverage to **31,000** uninsured residents.
- Guarantee that **9,300** residents with pre-existing conditions can obtain coverage.
- Protect **600** families from bankruptcy due to unaffordable health care costs.
- Allow **43,000** young adults to obtain coverage on their parents' insurance plans.
- Provide millions of dollars in new funding for the 4th District's community health centers.
- Reduce the cost of uncompensated care for health care providers by **\$20 million** annually.

Affordable High-Quality Health Care for the Middle Class

Essential health insurance reforms: Under the legislation, individuals with insurance can keep the coverage they have now, and it will get better. The insurance reforms in the bill prohibit annual and lifetime limits, eliminate rescissions for individuals who become ill while insured, ban coverage denials for pre-existing conditions, and reduce the cost of preventive care.

Tax cuts: Those who do not receive health care coverage through their employer will be able to purchase coverage at group rates through the new health insurance exchange. To make this insurance affordable, the legislation contains the largest middle-class tax cut for health care in history. There are 94,000 households in the district that could qualify for these credits if they purchase health insurance through the exchange.

Coverage for individuals with pre-existing conditions: There are 9,300 uninsured individuals in the district who have pre-existing medical conditions like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Under the bill's insurance reforms, they cannot be denied affordable coverage.

Financial security for families: There were 600 health care-related bankruptcies in the district in 2008, caused primarily by the health care costs not covered by insurance. The bill caps annual out-of-pocket costs at \$6,200 for individuals and \$12,400 for families who purchase insurance through the exchange or who are insured by small businesses. It also eliminates annual and lifetime limits on all insurance coverage. These reforms ensure that no family will have to face financial ruin because of high health care costs.

Security for Seniors

Improving Medicare: There are 99,000 Medicare beneficiaries in the district. The legislation improves their benefits by providing free preventive and wellness care, improving primary and coordinated care, and enhancing nursing home care. The bill also strengthens the Medicare Trust Fund, extending its solvency from 2017 to 2026.

Closing the Part D donut hole: Each year, 9,600 Medicare beneficiaries in the district enter the Part D donut hole and are forced to pay the full cost of their prescription drugs. Under the bill, these beneficiaries will receive a \$250 rebate in 2010, 50% discounts on brand name drugs beginning in 2011, and complete closure of the donut hole within a decade. A typical beneficiary who enters the donut hole will see savings of over \$700 in 2011 and over \$3,000 by 2020.

Helping Small Businesses

Helping small businesses obtain health insurance: Under the legislation, small businesses with 100 employees or less will be able to join the health insurance exchange, benefiting from group rates and a greater choice of insurers. There are 21,500 small businesses in the district that could benefit from this provision.

Tax credits for small businesses: Small businesses with 25 employees or less and average wages of less than \$50,000 will qualify for tax credits of up to 50% of the costs of providing health insurance. There are up to 19,700 small businesses in the district that could qualify for these credits.

New Coverage Options for Young Adults

New lower-cost health care options for young adults: The legislation will allow young adults to remain on their parents' policies until they turn 26. There are 43,000 young adults in the district who could benefit from this option. For individuals under age 30, the bill creates new, inexpensive policies that allow them to obtain protection from catastrophic health care costs.

Covering the Uninsured

Coverage of the uninsured: The legislation would extend coverage to 95% of all Americans. If this level of coverage is reached in the district, 31,000 residents who currently do not have health insurance will receive coverage.

Deficit Responsibility

No deficit spending: The cost of health care reform under the legislation is fully paid for, in large part by eliminating waste, fraud, abuse, and excessive profits for private insurers. The legislation will reduce the deficit by \$138 billion over the next ten years and by about \$1.2 trillion over the second decade.

Relieving the burden of uncompensated care: In 2008, health care providers in the district provided uncompensated care to individuals who lacked insurance coverage and were unable to pay their bills. Under the legislation, these costs of uncompensated care will be reduced by \$20 million.